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AUTHOR Littlefield, Robert S.
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ABSTRACT

To determine the extent of the involvement of undergraduates in speech tournament management, a survey was sent to 230 Directors of Forensics at schools with a Pi Kappa Delta affiliation. Most of the 102 respondents indicated that they use undergraduates when running a speech tournament but that concerns about utilizing undergraduates do exist. Major areas of concern are scheduling, tabulation, ballot distribution/checking, and judging--because students may lack the experience and the maturity to exercise ethical judgment. However, since it is almost impossible to run a tournament using only faculty members, steps must be taken to improve the quality of undergraduates involved. A curriculum should be established to educate undergraduates regarding tournament management. Also, opportunities should be provided at the high school and college level to give students practical experience in tournament management. If these steps are taken, the overall quality of future forensics coaches will be improved. Furthermore, more tournaments may exist if the coach does not have to run the tournament alone. (Tables of findings are included.) (DF)

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The Use of the Undergraduate Student in Tournament Management:

Some Ethical Considerations

Robert S. Littlefield

North Dakota State University

Fargo, ND 58105

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Abstract

Through a survey distributed to 230 Directors of Forensics at schools with a Pi Kappa Delta affiliation, 102 respondents (44%) provided the data used to explore the ethical considerations of undergraduate student involvement in tournament management. Scheduling, tabulation, ballot distribution, and judging were identified as four areas of concern regarding the use of undergraduate students in tournament management. The establishment of tournament management curriculum and the development of experiential applications were cited as strategies for reducing concern over the use of undergraduate students.

The Use of the Undergraduate Student in Tournament Management:
Some Ethical Considerations

Those who have run invitational forensic tournaments would agree that things generally run more efficiently when volunteers are available to assist in the completion of different tournament tasks. Because the majority of forensic programs have only one coach working with the team (Littlefield, 1985), the problem of finding help with tournament scheduling, tabulation, ballot distribution, and judging usually confronts the tournament director. However, the manner in which that director chooses to use undergraduate volunteers has not previously been addressed in the forensic literature dealing with tournament management; and as such, becomes the focus of this paper. While there are many undergraduates who are imminently qualified to assist, and even run, collegiate forensic tournaments, the question arises: Is there an ethical dimension in using undergraduates that should be further explored?

Before this question can be more fully examined, the significance of undergraduate involvement in tournament management should be established. In a survey sent to 230 Directors of Forensics at schools with a Pi Kappa Delta affiliation, 102 respondents (or 44%) indicated the frequency with which they used undergraduates in aspects of tournament management (scheduling, tabulation, ballot distribution, and judging). Eighty percent (90 respondents) indicated that they used undergraduates in some dimension of the tournament management process (Insert Table 1). Of those who did not respond affirmatively, several indicated that their schools did not host tournaments and therefore they did not feel they should comment at all. Clearly, most respondents who ran tournaments felt a need to use undergraduates. And yet, few standards or norms regarding their use seemed to emerge. Therefore, to clarify the role undergraduates are now and should be playing in the management of tournaments, this paper will

explore four potential areas of concern, examine two ways to reduce the impact of these concerns, and then provide what might be considered as an overriding positive dimension regarding the use of undergraduates in tournament management.

Potential Ethical Concerns

Four general areas of concern with the use of undergraduates in tournament management were categorized into the following topics: Scheduling, tabulation, ballot distribution/checking, and judging. In the survey, a question was asked of the respondents to: "Identify the most common problem you face when using or observing the use of undergraduates in tournament management." The following topics were cited in Table 2 (Insert Table 2). The most commonly identified problem was inexperience, which included lack of knowledge of the scheduling process and lack of familiarity with the judging pool and room suitability. Using students to schedule their peers was another problem tournament directors faced. When students from a host school regularly compete with students attending the tournament, the potential problem of purposely stacking certain sections and leaving other contestants with a relatively easy draw in the preliminary rounds may develop. Unless carefully supervised, the use of undergradautes with experience limitations or prejudices for or against certain students or schools could result in unethical actions being taken by members of the tournament staff.

Tabulation is another potential problem for tournament directors who use undergraduates. Tab room leaks, inability to delegate responsibility, double checking results, time constraints, and an inability to take orders make the use of undergraduates problematic. While prior tournament management experience was often used as a criterion for the inclusion of undergraduates in the running of

tournaments (Insert Table 3), the potential error and inability of the tournament director to supervise every dimension of the management process complicated their usefulness.

Ballot distribution and checking would appear to be less controversial and therefore provide fewer ethical constraints on the tournament director. However, it is in this area that leaks also may occur and "friends" may place an unreasonable amount of pressure on the tournament workers to discover "how they're doing" in various events. Also, because checking often is completed in areas where undergraduates may be waiting for results, the potential for "wandering eyes or ears" may also exist.

Finally, depending upon the tournament, undergraduates have been used as judges by tournament directors. Most respondents to the survey indicated that they always used undergraduates in judging high school tournaments; while the vast majority indicated that they never or rarely used undergraduates in the judging of college events. Prejudice or bias may have been the reason for not using an undergraduate in college events. Experience level also may have a reason why undergraduates were not used to any great extent on the collegiate level. While more often found in debate, undergraduate judges in some individual events tournaments may pose some ethical questions for tournament directors to face.

Strategies for Using Undergraduates

If scheduling, tabulation, ballot distribution/checking, and judging create potential ethical problems for tournament directors, what can be done to reduce the impact of these concerns? Two general responses emerge: (1) The establishment of curriculm to educate the undergraduate regarding tournament management; and (2) the development of experiential applications.

When asked how undergraduates are restricted in tournament management, the respondents to the survey varied in their comments. Twelve specifically identified coursework in tournament management as factors determining who could assist with tournament management responsibilities. Courses in directing forensics, issues in forensic education, or even the participation course serve as vehicles for providing training in the different aspects of tournament management. Departments of Speech Communication should make a commitment to forensic education in the curriculum it offers students who will be coaches on the high school or college levels. Without such a commitment, there can be little reduction in the ethical concerns associated with using students in tournament management positions who lack the proper training to complete the tasks effectively. There was additional support within the responses gathered under the "other" designation for pedagogical methods of training undergraduates. If students are trained in methods of scheduling, tabulation, ballot distribution/checking, and judging, they will be more helpful to the tournament director and less likely to do something which is perceived by others to be unethical.

A second method for reducing the concern over the use of undergraduates in tournament management utilizes experientially-based strategies. Although unsolicited, several respondents provided their perceptions regarding the use of undergraduates at high school and collegiate tournaments. A clear difference emerged. At high school tournaments, undergraduates were used a great deal, while at collegiate tournaments, they were used less extensively or in areas of less "responsibility." Perhaps using the high school tournaments as training grounds for undergraduates would provide them with the necessary experience to later manage a collegiate tournament more effectively. While the reputation of the tournament's quality may restrict somewhat the total transference of

management from faculty to undergraduate, a gradual shifting of responsibility may benefit the undergraduate significantly. In the same vein, as a student becomes more competent, the forensic organizations should provide management opportunities in tournaments of greater importance for undergraduates. In response to this, the Pi Kappa Delta National Honorary Forensic Fraternity created such an opportunity at its 1985 National Convention and Tournament held at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. An undergraduate served as student tournament director and assisted in all phases of registration, scheduling, tabulation, and distribution. While the tournament director was out of the tab room, the student tournament director was there to respond to questions for which she had information. While still in its infancy, this position provided an undergraduate with valuable experience at a national level which could ultimately serve her well as she moved into the forensic community as a coach or tournament director.

A Positive Dimension to Undergraduate Involvement in Tournament Management

Despite the ethical concerns regarding the use of undergraduates in tournament management or the workability or practicality of providing coursework or experiences which could teach undergraduates how to manage tournaments effectively, there is an overriding positive dimension which cannot and should not be ignored. First of all, by allowing undergraduates to learn how to schedule, tabulate, distribute and check ballots, and judge at forensic tournaments, the overall education of forensic coaches will be enhanced. If coaches concentrate on competition as the only dimension of the forensic education they provide for their students, they will leave their students seriously deficient. Perhaps equally important is the potential for more

tournament opportunities if undergraduates are utilized in tournament management. If coaches are trying to run programs single-handedly, they will be less likely to attempt to run a tournament at all (Insert Table 4). With undergraduates being utilized in a responsible manner, forensic directors may be more willing to begin hosting forensic contests.

Tournament management is a neglected area in forensic literature. Similarly, the use of undergraduates in tournament management has not been explored to discover the frequency with which they currently serve in management positions or the ethics of their use. This paper presented some preliminary information suggesting that while tournament directors may use undergraduates in different capacities and to different ends, students are being used and therefore must be trained if they are to be effectively incorporated in the forensic tournament staff.

SOURCE: Littlefield, R. S. (1985). The Forensic Participation Course: What is it Really For? The Forensic, 70 (3), 69-75.

Table 1

Frequency of Undergraduate Student Involvement in
Tournament Management of Collegiate and High School Contests

Activity	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Scheduling	30 10 HS*	15 3 HS*	9 2 HS*	11 1 HS*	19 1 HS*
Tabulation	41 13 HS*	18 3 HS*	6 0 HS*	9 0 HS*	10 1 HS*
Ballot Distribution	62 12 HS*	10 4 HS*	5 1 HS*	2 0 HS*	5 0 HS*
Judging	8 15 HS*	4 0 HS*	6 2 HS*	15 0 HS*	51 0 HS*
Not Responding	11 C/1 HS				

*Unsolicited distinctions made by respondents.

Table 2

Most Common Problems Involving the Use of
Undergraduate Students in Tournament Management

Problem	Frequency
Inexperience	33
Tab room leaks	19
Double checking results/tab room errors	12
Inadequate supervision leading to inaccurate procedures	14
Taking too much time to complete tasks	6
Getting enough help	4
Being objective judges	4
Inability to take orders	3
Delegating responsibility	2
Scouting	2
Lack of commitment	2
Too emotional about results	2
Trustworthiness with funds	1
Professional deportment	1

Table 3

Restrictions on Involvement of Undergraduate Students in Tournament Management

Restriction	Frequency
Year in School	22
Previous TME	42
Coursework	12
No Restrictions	28
Other Restrictions:	
Team Involvement	12
Willingness	9
Responsibility	8
Competence	5
Completion of Training Session	5
Interest	3
Competing at Tournament	2
Need	1
Meeting State Forensic League Guidelines	1
Scholarship Recipients	1

Table 4

Number of Tournaments Hosted Each Year by Respondents

Tournaments	Frequency
N/A	9
0	9
1	41
2	25
3	15
4	2
5+	1